processor-based system, said storage device to be local to the at least one storage element, said act of writing being performed independent of a post-boot application program.

16. The computer readable program product of claim **15**, wherein the computer readable program code writes the contents of the at least one storage element to the storage device occurs prior to loading the operating system.

17. The computer readable program product of claim **15**, further comprising computer readable program code for initiating a boot sequence subsequent to the act of writing.

18. The computer readable program product of claim **15**, wherein the at least one storage element is a non-volatile memory.

19. The computer readable program product of claim **15**, wherein the storage device is selected from a group consisting of: a compact disk drive, a digital disk drive, a digital video disk (DVD) drive, a solid state memory device, a hard disk drive, a magneto-optical disk drive, a tape drive, a zip drive, a jazz drive, a high density floppy drive, a high capacity removable media device, a low capacity removable media device, and a combination high and low capacity removable media device.

20. The computer readable program product of claim **15**, wherein the storage device comprises a file system; wherein in the act of writing the contents of the at least one storage element to the storage device, the at least one storage element is a file; and wherein the act of writing comprises transferring said file to said file system in said storage device.

21. The computer program product of claim **15**, wherein the computer readable program code for writing the contents of the at least one storage element to the storage device comprises:

(a) computer readable program code for locating a start-up directory stored in said memory;

(b) computer readable program code for writing a name corresponding to the at least one storage element, to said start-up directory;

(c) computer readable program code for transferring the contents of said at least one storage element to said storage device;

(d) computer readable program code for setting a directory pointer to said transferred contents.

22. In a computer system having a user computer in communication with a remote service computer having access to a database identifying information available to the service computer, a computer implemented method for transferring information to the user computer, comprising:

(a) writing the contents of at least one storage element of the user computer to a storage device on the user computer prior to booting an operating system on the user computer, said writing being performed independent of a post-boot application program;

(b) establishing a communications link between the user computer and the service computer; and

(c) presenting at the user computer, information available to the user computer.

23. The method of claim **22**, wherein in (a), the contents of the at least one storage element comprises an application program, and wherein the method further comprises:

initiating, by the application program, a transfer of software from the service computer to the user computer, subsequent to (b);

receiving, by the user computer, said software, wherein the software comprises at least one program that collects system information regarding the user computer.

24. The method of claim **23**, further comprising:

providing the system information to the service computer;

presenting, by service computer, information based on the system information.

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